

# FOCUS

## Missouri

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January 6, 2006

### HEADLINE NEWS

#### Life Science Research Board Has First Meeting



The Missouri Life Science Research Board formally met for the first time last week to receive Governor Matt Blunt's vision for the life sciences, learn more about the state of Missouri's life science industry and discuss its general operations and functions.

The board was created by HB 688 in 2003 to manage the Life Science Research Trust Fund, which becomes operational in July when it is to begin receiving 25 percent of all Missouri's master tobacco settlement funds. The fund will be used to improve the quantity and quality of research at Missouri's public and private not-for-profit institutions and to enhance technology transfer and commercialization derived from the state's Centers for Excellence. [Read more...](#)

#### Missouri's Economic Competitiveness Improves in 2005

Missouri ranked 19th in the State Competitiveness Report 2005 recently released by the Beacon Hill Institute at Suffolk University in Boston. The ranking was up one spot from 2004 and five from 2003. Missouri's greatest strengths were found in government/fiscal policy and infrastructure, but weaknesses exist in security and openness to the global economy. [Read more...](#)



#### 'Shooting' Begins in Cape Girardeau Next Week



Filmmakers will be in Cape Girardeau for four days starting Jan. 9 to shoot part of the movie "Killshot," which stars Diane Lane, Thomas Jane, Johnny Knoxville, Mickey Rourke, Rosario Dawson and Joseph Gordon. The movie, directed by John Madden, is based on an Elmore Leonard novel about a Detroit couple who are on the lam from a pair of hitmen. The pair land in Cape Girardeau as a part of the witness relocation program. Dozens of locals have been selected as extras for the scenes shot in Cape. [Read more...](#)

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#### UPCOMING EVENTS

January 9, 2006

[CDBG Application Training Workshop in Jefferson City](#)

January 12, 2006

[CDBG Application Training Workshop in Springfield](#)

January 12, 2006

[White House Faith-Based and Community Initiatives Conference](#)

January 25 - 27, 2006

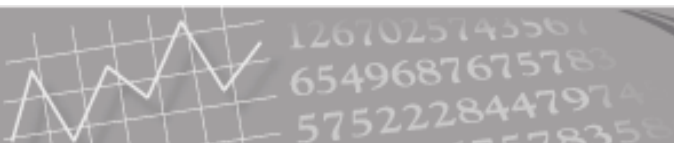
[2006 Annual Missouri Community Development Conference: Building Communities from Within](#)

January 31 - February 2, 2006

[WestPack 2006](#)

February 7-8, 2006

[MEDC Winter Conference](#)



### **Landing a New Job in the New Year: Active Job Hunting Tips**



Hunting for a job isn't easy. The traditional approach of using newspaper and Internet ads is not only time-consuming, it's reactive because you are applying for a job everyone already knows about. Active job-hunting, on the other hand, means never waiting for a job opening, but using techniques that can land your dream job before it's publicly announced. Here's an active job

hunting top-ten list from MERIC and the Division of Workforce Development's forthcoming *2006-07 Missouri Career Guide*. [Read more...](#)

### **Missouri's Population Increases by More Than 40,000**

Missouri's population increased by an estimated 40,778 or 0.71 percent between July 1, 2004, and July 1, 2005. With 5,800,310 people, Missouri has the 18th largest population among the states and the District of Columbia. [Read more...](#)



#### **FOCUS ON COMMUNITY**

##### **Grant Will Help Rocheport Improve Its Water System**

The Missouri Department of Economic Development awarded a \$300,000 water grant to the city of Rocheport. The state funds granted through the department's Community Development Block Grant Program will be used to improve water service.

[Read more...](#)

##### **Missouri Research Park Receives Award**

The Missouri Research Park recently received the 2005 Excellence in Community Development award from Progress 64 West, a business/civic membership organization focused on regional transportation, infrastructure and

#### **FOCUS ON WORKFORCE**

##### **Staffing, Recruiting Top HR issue for 2006**

A survey by *Human Resource Executive* magazine ranks staffing or recruiting as the biggest issue for American human resources directors in 2006. In a competitive job market, employers have to work harder to position themselves favorably in attracting the best talent, whether it is through good benefits, flexible work schedules or other perks.

[Read more...](#)

##### **Re-employment Rights Aid Returning Military Personnel**

The U.S. Department of Labor has issued regulations clarifying the Uniformed Services Employment and Re-employment Right Act.

#### **FOCUS ON BUSINESS**

##### **SEMO Milling LLC Begins Construction**

The Southeast Missouri Port Authority is preparing for construction of SEMO Milling LLC, a food-grade corn milling plant. The \$5 million project will create 60 new jobs and is the first food processing facility to be housed at the port. The mill will sit on five acres leased from the port and will include a four-story concrete milling facility, bins for inbound corn, tanks for storage and a two-story office building. The operation will be up and running within six months.

[Read more...](#)

##### **PMI Strong, Home Sales Down**

Recent data from the National Association of Purchasing Management -

### **ARCHIVED REPORTS**

[State Tax Credits Will Aid  
Procter and Gamble  
Manufacturing's  
Expansion in St. Louis](#)

[Blunt Announces NAP  
Tax Credits for North Side  
Team Ministry](#)

[December 2005 Missouri  
Focus Issues](#)

[November 2005 Missouri  
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### **QUICK LINKS**

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[Missouri LocationOne](#)

[GreatHires.org](#)

[Missouri Training and  
Employment Council  
\(MTEC\)](#)

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[Missouri Community  
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[Missouri Arts Council](#)

[Missouri Economic  
Development Council  
\(MEDC\)](#)

[Associated Industries of  
Missouri \(AIM\)](#)

development issues. All honorees were recognized for their contributions, which better the lives of families in St. Charles and St. Louis counties. [Read more...](#)

### **State Tax Credits to Fund Matched Savings Program**

DED has awarded up to \$43,500 in state tax credits through the Family Development Account to the Heart of America Family Services Individual Development Account Association. The 50 percent state tax credits are expected to leverage up to \$87,000 in total donations over a two-year period, which will be used to match the savings of eligible individuals at a rate of up to three-to-one. The savings can be used to help finance a home, make major home repairs, pay for education or job training costs or start a business. [Read more...](#)

The act protects the re-employment rights of National Guard and Reserve members who are called to active duty by requiring employers to provide them with the same or a comparable job, pay and benefits when they return to civilian life. For more information, see [www.dol.gov/vets](http://www.dol.gov/vets). [Read more...](#)

### **More IT Professionals, Accountants Needed in 2006**

Tampa, Fla.-based Kforce Professional Staffing reports that 66 percent of hiring managers are planning to recruit for newly created IT positions. Qualified accounting professionals are also in high demand. The staffing agency recently released its *2006 Salary & Employment Guides*, featuring detailed salary data and career outlooks for the technology, finance and accounting fields. [Read more...](#)

Chicago business index indicates that Midwest manufacturing is still strong and reflective of the manufacturing sector rebounding through the fourth quarter. The December Purchasing Manager's Index was 61.5, a slight decrease from 61.7 in November. Analysts are counting on strength in manufacturing to offset the expected weakness in consumer demand for housing. [Read more...](#)

### **Manufacturing Increases in KC Fed District**

Manufacturing activity in the Tenth Federal Reserve District, which includes western Missouri, increased in December and price indexes remained elevated. Future factory activity is expected to remain solid and expectations for future finished goods prices rose to a record high. [Read more...](#)

[Missouri Enterprise Business Assistance Center](#)

[Missouri General Assembly](#)

[Missouri Chamber of Commerce and Industry](#)

**MISSOURI**  
DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

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**Questions or Comments?**  
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## GLOBAL NEWS

### **Build-A-Bear Workshop Plans New Distribution Center**



Build-A-Bear Workshop will construct a \$24 million, 350,000-square-foot, 100-job distribution center near Columbus, Ohio, that will serve as the company's primary distribution center. Its current third-party distribution center in St. Louis will be converted to a pool point for local markets after September 2006. [Read more...](#)

### **Tax Savings for Purchasing Hybrid Cars**

Beginning Jan. 1, 2006, individuals who purchase some hybrid vehicles can get a large tax credit. In fact, some tax credits may be large enough to offset the hybrid vehicle's higher cost. The credits will be based on a vehicle's fuel economy, fuel savings exceeding 1,200 gallons over its lifetime, and emission standards and are subtracted directly from your federal tax bill, making them much more valuable than deductions. [Read more...](#)



### Ideas Grow in San Jose BioCenter



The San Jose BioCenter, one of the city's biotechnology incubators, is a key component of the city's economic development strategy. Opening to its first tenants in Sept. 2004, the center is already 75 percent full with 14 resident companies. The incubator offers lab space; pro bono help with legal, marketing, insurance and banking issues; specialized equipment; and flexibility to up and coming biotech companies.

The San Jose State University Foundation operates the incubator for the city for a one percent stake in each company. [Read more...](#)





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## Missouri

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January 13, 2006

### HEADLINE NEWS

#### Blunt Pledges to Build on Missouri's Economic Successes



Gov. Matt Blunt showed his ongoing commitment to creating jobs and expanding the economy in his State of the State Address. On Wednesday he proposed several budget recommendations that build on his economic record of success, which includes litigation reform, workers' compensation reform and the Missouri Quality Jobs Act.

His recommendations for FY 2007 include \$38.5 million in tobacco settlement funds for the life sciences; \$394,457 to fund additional DED sales and finance team staff; a \$10 million increase to the Jobs Retention Training Program; a \$4.5 million increase in funding for tourism; \$2.5 million to fund the new Promote Missouri Fund; \$150,000 to create new Innovation Centers around the state; and \$1 million to fund port capital improvements. He also renewed his call for a 10 percent ethanol standard that will generate jobs and economic development. (UPI Photo/William Greenblat)

[View 2006 State of the State address...](#)

#### General Revenue Collections Remain Strong in December



Missouri's net general revenue collections surged in December, increasing nearly 11 percent to \$646.9 million from \$584.2 million in December 2004. Over the fiscal year-to-date, collections have grown by 6 percent with corporate income and corporate franchise tax collections leading the way with a 43.3 percent increase for the year. Individual income tax collections

have risen 8.5 percent for the year. The strength of income tax collections is indicative of Missouri's good economic growth. [Read more...](#)

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January 25 - 26, 2006

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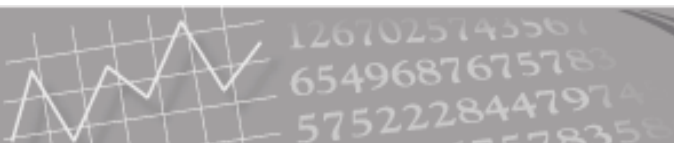
[MEDC Winter Conference](#)

April 23 -26, 2006

[Philadelphia CoreNet](#)

#### ARCHIVED REPORTS

[Blunt Says State Grant Will Help Rocheport](#)



### Missouri Sports Atmosphere is Big Draw for Economic Development



Dr. Marty Romitti, director of MERIC, explores the impact professional sports have on Missouri's business and economic climate in this month's installment of "Missouri Economy Today," a public affairs show aired on public access channels throughout the state. [Read more...](#)

### Percentage of Missourians Holding Multiple Jobs Unchanged

The percent of Missourians who worked more than one job was 6.5 percent in 2004, unchanged from 2003, but down 2.5 percentage points from a 9.0 percent peak in 1996. The national average was 5.4 percent in 2004, up from 5.3 percent in 2003.

[Read more...](#)



#### FOCUS ON COMMUNITY

### Willow Springs Community Foundation Receives Tax Credits

DED has approved up to \$30,000 in NAP tax credits for the Willow Springs Community Foundation. The tax credits are expected to leverage \$60,000 in donations and will be used by the foundation to preserve and renovate the historic Charles Ferguson Building into a multi-purpose community center. [Read more...](#)

### Evangelical Children's Home Receives Youth Opportunities Tax Credits

The Evangelical Children's Home will receive up to \$250,000 in state tax credits to leverage donations for its "Counseling Care for Troubled Youth" project, which provides counseling

#### FOCUS ON WORKFORCE

### GreatHires: A Great Tool for Online Recruitment

Next to having Missouri's largest hiring pool, the greatest advantage GreatHires.org touts over national job sites is the personal touch of customer service. Missouri's comprehensive, online job-matching site is fully equipped with real people behind the scenes, giving job seekers and businesses instant access to a professional staff and a wide array of resources through the many Missouri Career Center locations statewide. The system delivers better quality candidates and more efficient hiring processes so your company can enjoy a lower cost per hire and time saved in your HR functions. To learn more about GreatHires and other services available

#### FOCUS ON BUSINESS

### Processing Plant in Milan Raises Production

Premium Standard Farms, the country's fourth largest producer of pork products, recently announced that it will boost capacity at its pork processing plant in Milan. The company will invest about \$23 million to increase capacity by 35 percent. The expansion will create about 50 jobs, with increased production beginning in 2007. [Read more...](#)

### Columbia Presents Check to Business Incubator

Columbia Mayor Darwin Hindman presented a \$150,000 check last week to the Missouri Innovation Center to help fund the Mid-Missouri Technology Business Incubator. Supporters of the incubator believe the center is

### [Improve Its Water System](#)

### [Groups Receive Funding to Help Address Regional Skill Shortages](#)

### [December 2005 Missouri Focus Issues](#)

### [November 2005 Missouri Focus Issues](#)

### [QUICK LINKS](#)

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[Missouri General](#)

and other services to over 200 children and youth in the residential treatment programs throughout the St. Louis metropolitan area. [Read more...](#)

### **AmeriCorps St. Louis Gets Grant for Hurricane Relief Efforts**

AmeriCorps St. Louis received a federal grant that will enable them to continue and expand efforts to help families and communities recover from last fall's devastating hurricanes along the Gulf Coast. The \$245,846 award was granted to the Missouri Community Service Commission by the Corporation for National and Community Service to aid its sub-grantee, AmeriCorps St. Louis Safety Service Corps, whose members are serving in the three-state region. [Read more...](#)

through the Missouri Career Center, visit [www.greathires.org](http://www.greathires.org)

### **Moberly Career Center, Area Technical Center Held Computer Classes**

Basic computer skills classes were offered to jobseekers of all ages in the Moberly area during the first two weeks of January. The Moberly Career Center identified the skills gap and partnered with Moberly Area Technical Center to provide the training. As a result, local jobseekers now are equipped with basic computer skills to make their job search easier and make them more employable. The classes were offered at no cost by cadet teachers at the Tech Center. For more information about a Career Center near you, visit [www.ded.mo.gov/wfd](http://www.ded.mo.gov/wfd)

essential for Columbia to capture the new high-technology businesses and good-paying jobs that can result from the successful transfer of technological discoveries made at the University of Missouri. [Read more...](#)

### **Labor Analysis Shows Chillicothe Has Ready Workforce**

A recent labor analysis conducted by the Docking Institute of Public Affairs, shows that despite a declining population base, Chillicothe still has a sufficient, available labor force. The survey included 10 counties around Livingston County and portions of Macon and Ray counties. Officials said the important news is that the study shows people will travel to work from 30 or 40 miles away, which could help the city attract a major economic development project. [Read more...](#)

## [Assembly](#)

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## GLOBAL NEWS

### **Pardalos Elected to International Board of Governors**



Ann Pardalos, a member of DED's Marketing Team, has been elected to serve on the State International Development Organizations' Board of Governors. Pardalos is one of nine members of the SIDO Board of Governors and is also only one of two representatives from the Midwest on the board. SIDO is a non-profit, nonpartisan organization affiliated with The Council of State Governments and is comprised of international economic development practitioners and professionals from state and

related organizations across the country. [Read more...](#)

### **Tennessee Focuses on Growing Small Businesses**

Gov. Phil Bredesen recently revealed his vision to improve business, which includes a focus on small business development in Tennessee, particularly in the tourism industry. Bredesen says that tourism is a huge opportunity for small business people from attractions to restaurants. The Governor's other priorities include improving broadband to attract business,



education, healthcare and emergency preparedness. [Read more...](#)

### **Kentucky Awards \$6 Million to Bolster Startups, Innovations**



The Kentucky Science and Technology Corp. and the Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education have awarded \$6 million to 105 companies through knowledge-based economy programs created by the Kentucky Innovation Act of 2000. Awards are given to help stimulate business start ups, technology companies, patents and other innovations in the areas of biosciences, environmental technologies, human health and development, information technology and communications, and materials science and advanced manufacturing. [Read more...](#)



# FOCUS

## Missouri

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January 20, 2006

### HEADLINE NEWS

#### Blunt, Steinhoff Set Aggressive Path for 2006



With the 2006 legislative session in full swing, DED Director Greg Steinhoff will be spending more of his time working with the governor's office and the Legislature to support and promote initiatives that build on last year's successes. The department will continue to focus on creating jobs, boosting Missouri's economy and increasing the state's competitiveness in the global marketplace, including efforts to expand the life sciences and enhance opportunities for small businesses and entrepreneurs. [Read more...](#)

#### Missouri Job Creation Soars While Unemployment Rate Plunges

Missouri's seasonally adjusted unemployment for December was 5.1 percent down from 5.6 percent in November and nearly a full point below the 6 percent unemployment rate in January 2005. Meanwhile, 7,600 new jobs were added to Missouri's payroll last month, bringing to 38,300 the total number of new jobs created in 2005. [Read more...](#)



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February 7 - 8, 2006

[MEDC Winter Conference](#)

March 17 - 28, 2006

[Governor's Trade Mission to Europe](#)

April 9 - 12, 2006

[BIO 2006 Chicago, IL](#)

**MERIC**  
TRENSIGHTS

#### MERIC Extends Its Outreach Efforts



MERIC is extending its outreach efforts as part of its mission to provide value-added economic research with a customer focus. For example, MERIC Outreach, Training and Technology Manager

Franciena King recently traveled to Kansas City to facilitate a workshop on targeted industries. [Read more...](#)

#### Profiling Missouri Communities: Joplin

Joplin, located in Jasper County, is Missouri's 14th largest city with a population of 46,830. This southwest Missouri county's population is projected to increase 17 percent by 2025, faster than the 9.2 percent projected growth in the state as a whole.

[Read more...](#)





### **City of Exeter Public Water System Improvements**

A state grant will help improve the city of Exeter's water distribution system and provide an adequate and safe water supply to area residents. The \$500,000 CDBG water grant will be used to replace aging water distribution lines and expand water storage capacity. [Read more...](#)

### **State Tax Credits to Help Fund Matched Savings Program**

The Missouri Department of Economic Development has awarded up to \$43,500 in state tax credits to the Heart of America Family Services Individual Development Account Association. The foundation aims to encourage low to moderate income families to save money by providing incentives such as financial education classes and matched family development accounts. The tax credits are expected to leverage up to \$87,000 in donations that will be used to complement money saved by an eligible individual up to a three-to-one match. [Read more...](#)

### **Hannibal Veteran's Rep Lends Support at King Celebration**

Central Missouri celebrated Martin Luther King, Jr.'s life and legacy during an annual birthday celebration in Jefferson City last week centered on the theme "Salute to Education." Jackie Stanton, a Veterans' Representative from the Hannibal Career Center, who's every day work involves community outreach, attended the event in support of Hannibal Middle School student Niga King. King won first place in the youth poetry contest - middle school division.

### **Quality Candidates in High Demand**

As the nation's workforce begins to shrink, businesses will be forced to look at new and creative ways to recruit and retain quality workers. Some of those techniques may include employee referral bonuses, new hire sign-on bonuses and increasing salaries or wage wars. Companies may also look to increase their human resources staff, more aggressively market job openings, and improve the skills of their existing workforce. [Read more...](#)

### **Centene Vows 800 Jobs by 2010**

Centene announced last week plans to invest \$190 million in a new corporate headquarters in Clayton. The project will result in 800 new jobs over the next four years, boosting the company's labor force to 1,200. The announcement came following the approval of the firm's redevelopment proposal by the city of Clayton. The St. Louis-based company provides managed care programs and services and operates health plans in seven states. [Read more...](#)

### **Chrysler Will Nearly Double Production Capacity**

Chrysler spokesman David Elshoff says the upgrades to its assembly plants in Fenton are expected to increase capacity by 43 percent. As a result of improvements here and at other locations, the company will be able to produce more vehicles and vary the types of vehicles produced at those sites. The company plans to bump up production by 3.5 million to 4 million vehicles a year by 2007. [Read more...](#)

April 23 - 26, 2006  
[Philadelphia CoreNet](#)

### **ARCHIVED REPORTS**

[Blunt Says Willow Springs Community Foundation Will Receive State Tax Credits](#)

[Pardalos Recognized By National Groups as Leader in International Trade Promotion](#)

[December 2005 Missouri Focus Issues](#)

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### **QUICK LINKS**

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[MERIC](#)

[Missouri Community Service Commission \(MCSC\)](#)

[Missouri Arts Council](#)

[Missouri Economic Development Council \(MEDC\)](#)

### **Great Rivers Greenway District Develops Bike Trail**

The Great Rivers Greenway District, which acquired a two-mile stretch of an abandoned rail corridor, will develop it into a biking and pedestrian route. The corridor will connect densely populated neighborhoods north of downtown St. Louis to the McKinley Bridge Bikeway, the Branch Street Trestle Connector and the Riverfront Trail along the Mississippi River. [Read more...](#)

### **MU Now Offers Entrepreneurship Courses**

The University of Missouri-Columbia is offering entrepreneurship courses for the first time this semester in response to a rising demand from students and in keeping pace with offerings at other higher education institutions. MU's College of Business will offer a new graduate course and undergraduate classes that focus on problem solving and business planning. [Read more...](#)

### **Emerson Wins \$13 Million Korea Contract**

St. Louis-based Emerson Process Management has received a \$13 million contract to install its PlantWeb digital plant architecture in the Yonghung Thermal Power Plant in Seoul, Korea. The network will provide boiler control, automatic mill/burner control, furnace temperature monitoring, scrubber control and emissions monitoring at the plant, which serves the Seoul metropolitan and surrounding areas. [Read more...](#)

## **GLOBAL NEWS**

### **Hawaii: World's Largest Outdoor Biotech Lab**



Genetic engineering in the Aloha State is awakening scientists to the fact that Hawaii has long served as the world's largest outdoor biotechnology lab. Since 1988, federal regulators have approved more than 10,600 applications to grow experimental biotech crops in the United States and more of these are in Hawaii than any other state. The humid weather provides a year-round growing season and Hawaii's location gives scientists seclusion away from watchful eyes of anti-industry activists. Organic farmers, however, are concerned about how biotechnology may affect their futures. [Read more...](#)

### **Boeing Will Build Facility in India**

Boeing officials announced last week that the company has committed to building a regional maintenance, repair and overhaul base, along with a pilot training facility in India. The announcement was made during a signing ceremony in which Air India agreed to pay more than \$11 billion for 68 new jets. [Read more...](#)



### **Trade Surplus in China Hits \$102 Billion**



China's trade surplus in 2005 tripled to a record \$102 billion, making it the world's fastest-growing major economy in the past decade. Exports increased by 28 percent, while imports rose by 18 percent, moving China closer to overtaking Germany as the world's second-largest exporter. Economists expect slower export growth at about 20 percent this year as the expansion in new production capacity tapers off. [Read more...](#)

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# FOCUS

## Missouri

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January 27, 2006

### HEADLINE NEWS

#### **Jobs Increase, Unemployment Falls in Most Missouri Metros/Counties**



Nearly all Missouri's metropolitan areas created jobs in December while unemployment rates fell in most of the remaining parts of the state. Six of the state's seven metropolitan areas had higher employment in December with most areas experiencing seasonal growth in retail trade, but seasonal decreases in construction employment. The additional 7,600 new jobs created statewide last month bring the total number of new jobs created in 2005 to 38,300. Meanwhile, 74 of the state's 115 counties had lower unemployment rates in December than in

November, and 100 had lower rates than a year ago. [Read more...](#)

#### **Ford Announces It Will Idle Hazelwood Plant**

The Ford Motor Company disclosed a sweeping restructuring plan Monday that detailed closures of 14 assembly and parts plants, including the Ford Hazelwood facility. Despite the news that the Hazelwood plant will be idled in March, Gov. Matt

Blunt, St. Louis County Executive Charlie Dooley and Hazelwood Mayor T.R. Carr released a [joint statement](#) signifying their ongoing commitment to working with Ford to reverse the decision and secure a long-term future for the Hazelwood workers.

[Read more...](#)



#### **Blunt Unveils Lewis & Clark Discovery Initiative**



Gov. Matt Blunt today unveiled his Lewis & Clark Discovery Initiative designed to transform the Missouri Higher Education Loan Authority (MOHELA) into a public-private

partnership that would generate \$425 million for higher education institutions across the state. If approved by the Missouri General Assembly, the initiative will provide a one-time infusion of funds that would be used for capital improvement projects at state universities, an endowed scholarship fund, endowed professorships for Missouri research scientists and to attract and retain life science companies and commercialize existing research. [Read more...](#)

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**February 7 - 8, 2006**

[MEDC Winter Conference](#)

**March 7 - 9, 2006**

**Monterrey, Mexico**  
[Expo Manufactura](#)

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[Governor's Trade Mission to Europe](#)

**April 9 - 12, 2006**

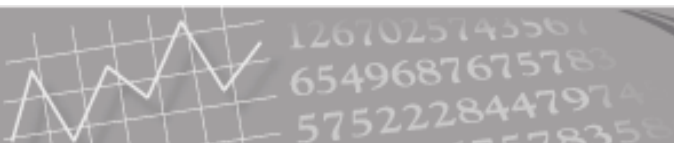
[BIO 2006](#)

**April 23 - 26, 2006**

[Philadelphia CoreNet](#)

**April 30 - May 3, 2006**

[National Business Incubation Association's 20th International Conference on Business Incubation](#)



### Warmer Weather Lowers Projections for Costly Winter



Warmer than normal temperatures in Missouri are easing consumer concerns about their heating bills this winter. New figures from the Public Service Commission indicate heating costs may grow at a slower rate of 33 percent over last year, rather than the 44 percent increase estimated in November. Missourians can expect to pay \$879 on average this winter, up from the estimated cost for last winter of \$662. [Read more...](#)

### Inflation in Missouri's Metros Lower than Nation in 2005

The U.S. average rate of inflation for 2005 was 3.4 percent, up from 2.7 percent in 2004. Price increases in Missouri's major metropolitan areas were lower than the national average with a modest 2.5 percent increase in the Kansas City MSA and a 3.3 percent increase in the St. Louis MSA. [Read more...](#)

#### FOCUS ON COMMUNITY

#### Great Rivers Community Reinvestment Receives Tax Credits

The DED has awarded \$300,000 in state tax credits, issued through the Family Development Account program, to Great Rivers Community Reinvestment. The tax credits will be used to attract donations that will help low-income families build their assets and gain greater economic independence. Donors receive 50 percent tax credits for their contributions. The 12-month fundraising period is expected to leverage up to \$600,000 in total donations. [Read more...](#)

#### FOCUS ON WORKFORCE

#### UMR Is One of Nation's Most Wired Campuses

The University of Missouri-Rolla is one of America's most wired campuses, according to *The Princeton Review's* Most Connected Campuses study. Together with *Forbes*, UMR was identified as one of the top 25 most connected campuses based on factors like the availability of a campus-wide network, wireless network, online streaming audio or video of courses, online registration and class offerings, and percentage of undergraduates that own a computer. [Read more...](#)

#### FOCUS ON BUSINESS

#### KC, St. Louis Rank in Top 50 for Small Business Markets

According to statistics released this week by the American City Business Journals, St. Louis ranks No. 22 and Kansas City ranks No. 27 among the nation's 50 largest metropolitan areas for their support of small businesses. Population growth rates, small business concentration, wages and changes in private sector employment and payrolls were among twelve factors that were evaluated. Cities in the South and West dominated the top rankings this year. [Read more...](#)

### ARCHIVED REPORTS

[Missouri Job Creation Soars While Unemployment Rate Plunges](#)

[State Tax Credits to Help Fund Matched Savings Program in Kansas City](#)

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### **State Seeks Nominations for Carnahan Service and Volunteer Award**

The Missouri Community Service Commission is seeking nominations for its prestigious Carnahan Service and Volunteer Award to be presented April 19 during the Commission's Awards Banquet at the Governor's Mansion. This award will recognize one outstanding volunteer from Missouri who has exhibited a long-term commitment to volunteerism. Nominations are due by Tuesday, January 31. [Read more...](#)

### **Scotland County Receives Homeland Security Grant**

The Scotland County Sheriff's Department in Memphis received a federal grant from the Division of Homeland Security. The department is using the \$33,000 grant to pay for its new computer and jailing system. Scotland County started using the program November 16, becoming the first department in Missouri to use the system. [Read more...](#)

### **Kirksville Job Fair a Success**

The Kirksville Area Chamber of Commerce, along with the local Missouri Career Center, Northeast Missouri WIB, the Division of Workforce Development and Heritage House Realty, hosted a job fair last week in Kirksville with 28 employers and over 250 job seekers attending. The hosting parties hope to make this an annual event and partner together on other future projects. [Read more...](#)

### **Companies See Benefits In Helping Employees Realize Their Potential**

A growing number of companies and nonprofits now offer on-site training and degree-producing programs as a way to help employees advance and help themselves reduce turnover rates, build a stronger workforce and increase morale. BJC HealthCare in St. Louis implemented the Center for Lifelong Learning in 2001 to help its employees enhance their work skills and earn certificates or degrees. So far, 150 employees have graduated from the program. [Read more...](#)

### **Carnahan Supports Small Businesses and Consumer Protection**

Secretary of State Robin Carnahan has unveiled her 2006 legislative package which is focused on promoting the growth of Missouri small businesses and protecting Missouri consumers. Her proposals include several plans to ease costs and risks to small business owners and crack down on investment fraud. Carnahan is expected to introduce additional legislation pertaining to changes in election laws. [Read more...](#)

### **Springfield-Branson National Airport Reports Record Year**

Growth in total passengers at the Springfield-Branson National Airport increased 23.1 percent in 2005. Airport officials attributed the phenomenal growth to the addition of Delta and Allegiant airlines and the expansion of services to five new cities. They project passenger numbers to increase by a 10 percent growth level in 2006. [Read more...](#)

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**Questions or Comments?**  
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### Georgia Creates "Entrepreneur Friendly" Program



The Georgia Department of Economic Development is trying to create a more entrepreneur friendly environment within its communities. Through its Entrepreneur & Small Business Office, it provides a community-based program that helps create an entrepreneur environment and builds small business strategies into the community's overall economic development plan. Regional project managers will provide technical assistance to help communities establish an entrepreneur support program, identify local entrepreneurial assets and develop effective local strategies. [Read more...](#)

### Scholarships to Retain Young Citizens in Vermont

In an effort to stop young skilled workers from leaving the state, Vermont Governor James Douglas has proposed the creation of more than 12,000 scholarships to Vermont college students who agree to stay in the state for at least three years after graduation. The 15-year, \$175 million Vermont Promise Scholarship program would be funded by an increase in monies from the state's tobacco settlement funds. Based on merit and need, the scholarships would reduce tuition by 25 to 50 percent. [Read more...](#)



### Akron Invests in Israeli Incubator



Akron, Ohio and area businesses have signed an agreement to invest at least \$1 million from the greater Akron area in a high-tech incubator in Netanya, Israel. The Targetech-Akron incubator is believed to be the first partnership of its kind between a U.S. city and a foreign incubator. Under the partnership, new graduates from the Israeli incubator will come to Akron, setting up shop in the city's recently expanded incubator and taking advantage of its high-end manufacturing base and skilled workforce. [Read more...](#)